In the Land of War

A PADRE WITH THE BAGPIPES

Lauchlan MacLean Watt

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In the Land of War

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BY

LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT

AUTHOR OF
'THE GREY MOTHER'
'BRITANNIA'S ANSWER,' ETC.

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I have endeavoured in this to show the people at home what the men, the camps, and the life among them are, out yonder, as I saw them, in the Land of War.

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THE LARK IN THE SKY

In the mire of the Valley of Shadow,
The shadow of pain,
We stood in the wearisome trenches,
The terrible trenches,
In battle's red rain.

The heavens were watchful above us;
Within us was gloom,
For the rifles rasped hideous laughter,
Hell's horrible laughter,
The laughter of doom.

But sudden our hearts leapt within us,
And woke with a cry;
For a marvel dropt down from the cloudland,
Like a star from the cloudland—
'Twas a lark in the sky.

Our souls sought the hills and the meadows
Afar o'er the foam;
As through mist we beheld the long ridges,
The green and grey ridges,
The dear fields of home.

And we babbled old words in our longing,
And our lips tried to pray—
"O God, bring us safe to the homeland,
To the hearts in the homeland
We love far away."

And we saw, as in dream, the dear faces,
As in moments gone by;
Then we turned us again to our vigil,
Made strong for our vigil
By that lark in the sky!

LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT

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In the Land of War

I

In connection with work among the soldiers, with the army in France, it is difficult to know what to concentrate upon—there is so much to tell. Certainly it is a great and enriching experience to be in contact with the men who are enduring hardship, suffering, and sacrifice for the sake of empire, home, and the liberty of the world. To be in contact with them anywhere and under any circumstances at the present moment is uplifting; but to be brought into touch with their life and work, their joy and sorrow, in the land of war, in intimate communion with them, as I was through three months of a bitter winter, is to have given to you a memory such as you can never forget until you die.

The thought of these brave men grows into your heart. I have been with them when they came in their thousands aboard the great transport. My work was to welcome them then—to speak to them words of strengthening and comfort, when some of them were a little homesick,

and all of them were weary. One hardly believed that such splendid men had still been left in our country. I remember a friend of mine, an elder in Edinburgh, who one day stood beside me as the brave-faced fellows marched out; and he said, "I feel proud—but I feel humbled too, to think that such fine men are going on, to die for me, while I can do so little for them."

I have seen them, also, in the camps, in the discomfort of mud, wind, rain, frost; and in the hospitals, after the big fights where they had been wounded and stricken. And the thought of them haunts my memory, so that dark never wears to dawn but I dream of them; and I never wake at night without listening for the moving feet of the sons of empire, marching to the field of sacrifice for the freedom of the world. I have not yet shaken myself free from the feeling, when the gloaming comes, that I ought to be up and moving to the camps to speak to them ere they go on toward the fighting line, passing, so many of them, to the great Beyond in the way of the unreturning.

To have got into tender touch with the secrets of their hearts, to be entrusted with the deepest thoughts of their home, is to have passed through a door of widest opportunity, is indeed to have received a revelation which hallows your life and thought.

Home is what grips the soldier there. The

outrages in Belgium—the thought of what might happen here—the thought of their wives and daughters—that is what shook and held them. There was no maudlin sentimentality—there was true sentiment in the thought. And every man is ready to make of his body or his grave a barricade against the cruelty and lust of our malignant and unscrupulous foe.

How true they were! "Splendid" is what everybody calls them. And that is just because there is no better word; for their loyalty, their courage, and their patience are unspeakable.

It is pathetic to discover out there, among the Scotch especially, how much the minister and the kirk mean to them. I have seen men whose faces were scarred with the ache of wounds, brighten when they met a fellow countryman, and they would ask me keenly, "If I kent their man?" And they would tell me the things he said the Sunday before they left, and show with pride the Testament he had given. It was humbling to think how much a little thing meant to them then.

We were not distressed, yonder, by drunkenness among the men. They were too earnest—too much pressed around by great realities. In this connection I was expressly struck with one incident. One night I was seeking a way among the docks, to get to a great shed or hangar in which the Y.M.C.A. had their establishment. I

could not find the direction, so I went up to a sentry, beside whom some other soldiers were standing, and I said to myself, "These men will know the landmark by which we usually guided ourselves to that shed." For it was a public-house called "The Three Nuns," near the quay. So I asked, "Can you tell me the way to 'The Three Nuns'?" Not a man there knew it. So I said, "I was just wanting to get to the Y.M.C.A.!" And every man was immediately able to tell me where that was.

One had only to observe the queue at the Y.M.C.A. huts, gathered up in the mud and the chill, an hour and a half before the door opens, with their backs to the canteen, to be convinced that if you give the men tea and coffee, a chance to write home, an opportunity to join in the songs that they love, and to have a straight talk for Christ, you will make them perfectly happy, no matter how severe the circumstances of life may be.

How men were possessed and lifted out of themselves at times in this campaign! I remember one saying to me how, one day, as he charged, leaping over dead body after dead body — "Scotties — Highlanders," said he — he picked up a Testament which had fallen from the pocket of one of them. As in a lightning flash some words on the open page caught him; and, as he ran he shouted, till he infected his neighbours, who shouted at the Germans, too, as

they fought, "I will not leave you nor forsake you!"

It is a time of uplifting out yonder, just as at home it is turning people to think of deeper things. Often the absolute reality of life and death used to enter right into the huts in which we were gathered, in a way that hushed your soul, and stayed your very heart-beat. Thus, one night, in a crowded camp, hundreds of men were gathered, for it was Sunday evening. I was not sure how I was to grip the very miscellaneous crowd that was there—Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen—men not of one faith only, but representing all the Churches. But when the time came to speak I thought of the Beatitudes, those grapes of God, which all our squeezing cannot squeeze dry. The air seemed filled with expectation. We knew there was a big move on, but that was all we knew. So I said to them, "Boys, in a big campaign, it's a good thing to keep near your Captain, if you can trust him. But if you can't get near your Captain, it's a great thing to follow a true man in the file before you. Here are the nine men of Christ. He who keeps step with them will come out, even though he dies, at the point of victory—the merciful, the meek, the pure, the peacemaker . . ." Then I told them how they were out there, standing up for those who could not stand up for themselves, willing to fight and die for the peace of Europe. And just then the

door opened; the Sergeant-Major entered, and, calling out the names of regiment after regiment, ordered them to fall in at once, "full marching order." The men rose and passed out into the night. There was a dead hush for a little after that, and I felt that few words indeed were needed to drive the lesson home; so I had just to say, "Men, you have heard the call. Who falls in behind Christ, the King?"

As forcibly, perhaps, in another way, was the reality brought into contact with one. I was in a great hospital one day when Lena Ashwell's concert party from London were giving an entertainment. All the wounded who could bear it were brought into the ward. Bret Hayden, the entertainer, was holding them in laughter with his whimsical stories. Suddenly I saw, through the glass door beside which I sat, a man carrying on his back a helpless figure in crumpled mud-stained khaki; and he passed along the corridor. Immediately after him came two men supporting a limping soldier; and then other two men carrying a stretcher, and on the stretcher a still figure with white bandages about his head; and they passed along the corridor. Somehow I did not feel inclined for laughter after that. Life became suddenly real. Our feet slipped through to the eternal.

It was fine to see, in the grey morning, the brave men marshalled up; and as they set off with their faces for the Front, kind eyes would look

a farewell greeting to you, or one to whom you had last night been speaking would give a last wave of his hand. Your prayer went with them, and sometimes, through the day, remembering, your eyes got dim with mist.

II

THERE is no need at this time of day to discuss the causes of the war. Arrogant ambition, proud brutality, and unprincipled betrayal of plighted promises and solemn treaties plunged Europe into the pain and darkness of horrible international strife, and threatened the stability and liberty of the world. The call to stand in for the integrity of our empire, the defence of the helpless, and the safety of our homes, with all dear to us there, was responded to by the children of the blood and the children of the flag with absolutely miraculous spontaneity.

I was one of those who was invited at the beginning of the war to go out as a spiritual friend of the men who were fighting and enduring hardships for our sakes, and God gave me opportunities of service, with experiences unforgettable and inexhaustibly rich.

On Christmas Eve, therefore, I was in London *en route* for France. It was, indeed, strange to be upon the threshold of the festive season, and yet to be also on the way to the land where the voice of war was heard above all other voices—to think of the song of the angels proclaiming

"Peace on earth, and goodwill unto men!" to the over-mastering accompaniment of the shrieking shrapnel and the terrible roar of guns!

It was to be a very strange Christmas to many, full of wearing anxieties over dear ones who suddenly have dropped into the great world of the "missing"; and dark with that proud anguish over the unreturning who have finally passed into the vast Beyond. Their sorrow was all the more a grief that can have little easement in it, though their beloved are crowned for ever with the glory of having done their duty even unto death, obtaining thus the reward of sacrifice; for, more than ever, in days that are to be, shall we need our best for the rebuilding of our nation.

The dear hearts that at such a time sit within their silent homes remembering, are in better ease, however, than they who have no certain knowledge of the fate of those they love. As one said to me, not long before, in her agonized uncertainty, "Money is nothing—food is nothing—fire is nothing. I only want to ken where Davie is!" The anxious soul pictures him in every imaginable plight—lying out wounded in sodden fields, far from anything like tender help; or suffering in hastily improvized hospitals, liable to be shelled at any moment; or hungry and cold in foreign prisons; or dead in stricken trenches.

It was, indeed, for most, a time of agonizing prayer, and not of mirthful greetings; but yet it was a time also for patient courage, and confident

strength. More than we know of will come back again; though alas! more than we can afford to lose are gone for ever. Yet children's children will remember with pride that bravery and self-sacrifice had not passed out of date in our time, and that, when great ideals were scorned and the sacred honour of our plighted word was at stake, the men of our race and blood and empire heard Britannia's call, and, knowing what they risked, made the eternal venture, and were not put to shame, in the splendour of sacrifice for others.

It is an axiom of ordinary experience that when we are deeply interested in any topic we seem to see evidences of its influence everywhere around us. If you are going to write or lecture on Shakespeare, or the effect of war on literature or literature on war, you find, near you and far from you, that a wave of telepathic quickening has touched the whole world—the publishers' lists get suddenly charged with the subject that has engrossed yourself; and your book, your lecture, or your poem, seems to have been all at once forestalled. So, whether it was that one was full of the thought of the war, and the brave fellows who were going off to victory or death for the sake of liberty and honour—probably, of course, just because one's own thoughts were concentrated on the crossing in a troopship, in the dark, for the seat of conflict, one felt the whole city pulsing with military activities. Every wall had something on it making you pause to

remember that your country was passing through a very momentous crisis—that it was a season not of light mirthfulness, but of grave and solemn duty. Even the taxi-cabs were pressed into the work of awaking our citizens to the empire's needs.

In London the black cloud of war seemed settled over all. Even by day the town was quieter than usual. The ubiquitous racketing 'busses had disappeared from the streets; but, when we went to France and saw them clattering about the old French towns and in the camps beyond, we understood where they had gone to. It was startling, in fact, to encounter, in narrow streets, and in the roads about the camps, noisy motor-lorries labelled with the name of somebody's Stout, or with the familiar directions of the Bank or Highgate!

One could not help being impressed by the tense quivering hush which seemed to fill everything, day and night. It was not so much that the people were moving about quietly, as that you felt their hearts beating. A stern earnestness touched with anxiety, a resolve with a question behind it, gave the keynote to it all.

In the streets you would suddenly hear the vast and sublime assemblings of an empire under arms. They passed you, and your heart stood still for a moment at the thought of what it meant, to us all as a people, and to the fresh-faced fellows who have full knowledge of the

aims that have drawn them together into those ranks. They were fit and steady, strong men, with a look of duty in their faces. They will do their best, and the bravest can do no more. Do not forget them, you who have to stay at home. For their sacrifice, lay down on their behalf something that you can spare, even, it may be, with difficulty. They have children that may never remember their fathers' faces; and wives who will sit, as I have seen them, feverishly knitting at the quiet fireside of their lonely homes, trying to keep their hearts calm, by the constant industry of their hands. No soldier's home should be forgotten; no woman or child left behind to the pain of anxious waiting should ever be cold, or hungry, during the war or afterwards.

There was a very remarkable absence of music in all this marching, which accentuated the seriousness of it. Not a pipe,—not a bugle,—not a drum! The men went past you, through the streets—not so busy now as before the crisis, on and on, till the streets of sleepy towns and ruined villages in France and Belgium will hear their marching, as we have heard it. And so much of it will be unreturning! Yet, no matter, —still the necessity abides, and still the call goes out around the world, and still the marching feet, responding, send their answer forward. This must ever be, until, close up behind the angel of Victory, those myriad feet are heard by all the earth.

For not only are the men of our race responding now to the call for the sake of liberty, right, and honour. Not only are they moved by the thought of ancient seats of learning and time-old shrines of worship shattered into dust, of children outraged, and women shamed and slain; but now they are thinking of their own fair seaward-looking towns, their own homes, their own beloved. The remembrance of the women and children, and the innocents of Scarborough, Hartlepool, Whitby, Newcastle and Hull goes before them. Shadows like angels "with bright hair dabbled in blood," lead them on. And as the memory of Cawnpore made death and all its risks seem trivial to our brave soldiers in another day of danger, so the cry of those slain wantonly at home will beat against the hearts and brains of our brave fellows. God pity the enemy in the day of fight, when there are such memories, leading, with outstretched finger, the valiant into the fight.

It was very weird to be upon the waters on the eve of Christmas. The troopship was crowded with men, and it was perfectly evident that they also felt deeply the solemn circumstances of that season. Many of them were on the waters by night for the first time; and they gathered into little whispering groups, watching the flickering Morse signals of the vigilant battleships that guarded our course across the Channel. Just before I turned in, a little fellow came to me and

asked me about the stars and constellations, and how navigators knew the way they ought to go. He slipped off, almost on tiptoe, so deeply did this movement on the dark seas touch him, to fetch a comrade to hear also about the ancient sailors steering by the stars, but something must have detained them, for he did not return. Then the men grew weary, and lay down, whispering together, till they fell asleep.

Christmas Eve on the waters, far from home—and on the way to unknown trials—their hearts full of the thoughts of the dear women and children precious beyond expression of words—how wonderful it was! A silver mist lay along the face of the deep, and the night was full of glamour and witchery. The soul was ready for mystery. And it received it. For, about midnight, just when we were thinking of the faces in the firelight, a strange thing swam into our ken. A great ship, like a ship that men saw of old in ballad times, like a ship of stars, illumed with innumerable lamps, came sailing across our track. The men leapt to their feet and crowded to the side. "What ship is that?" they whispered. And as it came on out of the silver mystery of the dim night we saw its name spelt out in shining lights. It was the beautiful *Asturias*, the hospital ship; and on its side, touched into pathetic beauty, was emblazoned the great Cross, red as with the blood of Christ's immortal love, the symbol of pity for the suffer-

ing and the sad. It was like Christ Himself, walking the waters, carrying in His bosom, home, the stricken and the wounded, out of the Land of War, whose shores ourselves were seeking. And when it had passed, and faded from our sight across the sea, we lay down to our rest, touched into peace as though by contact with a vision of the divine.

III

ONE is very much impressed by the varied details of an army in war. People at home think of "the Front" as altogether a thing of trenches, of bayonet-charging or fate-dealing rifle shots, and of shrapnel fire continuously shrieking its message of death, shattering the nerves of brave men. There is, of course, plenty of that. But the number of folks into whose thought of war never enters a single consideration of the matter of food for the troops, is perfectly amazing. The ordinary citizen thinks that what happens is just the summoning, by bugle-blast and beat of drum, of a great host who feel that their king and country want them; and then off they go to the fighting line to win or die for the glory of Britain! But there are innumerable questions which have to be faced ere that comes to pass, and even after such a thing as a fighting line is formed.

An army fights, as it marches, very much "upon its stomach." No nation can enter into warfare without first of all providing thoroughly for the feeding of its brigades; and there never was a campaign in history where this branch of

the comfort of the men in our army was so thoroughly attended to. Warm food of the very best has been supplied, right up in the trenches, unless under very exceptional circumstances, while in camps the Y.M.C.A. huts have given everything the soldier can desire.

It was sometimes very amusing to see how some of the men were making provision against privation in the way of food. I observed one Royal Scot, entraining, with a great long French loaf strapped across his knapsack. As he moved forward in the ranks you saw about half a foot of brown bread projecting on either side of his broad shoulders! Another time I saw a regiment of Canadians swinging into camp. Some of them had their bayonets fixed, and stuck upon a bayonet here and there was a loaf or a huge cheese!

Even among those who step enthusiastically forward in response to the empire's appeal, expecting to be sent right off where glory waits them, there is a lack of knowledge. They forget that they have first to learn the great secret of discipline, namely, self-forgetfulness, and the fact that they belong not to themselves but to the whole unit made up of many parts. They must find themselves, in patient drill, in practising to shoot straight, to dig trenches and holes for cover in the day of battle, and to endure hardships, becoming independent of wet and cold, hunger and exhausting toil. It takes many a day of very grim and strenuous labour ere the

hero is ready to go on to the Front and to fight for his king and country like the experienced soldiers who already are there.

In fact, the untrained man, or the man who is only half-trained, would be as dangerous to his fellows as an enemy himself in the ranks would be. In the day of stress he would give way; in the hour of need his rifle-fire would be ineffective; when steadiness in the face of death was sternly required his nerve would yield, and the line of defence or attack would be broken, making some great movement of advance or retreat perhaps entirely futile, or at any rate perilous beyond expression to the corps in which he served. Hence a man has to sink his individuality for the general good, and forget his comfort, his dignity, his own desires, in order that he may be developed for strong and true soldiering, that the purpose of the whole may be advanced, and victory be secured.

These are the main things which people who are out working among the soldiers of the Expeditionary Forces see most strikingly displayed. These Forces consist of men of all kinds. The labourer is serving alongside of the merchant, the clerk, the university student, and the professional man. But discipline has made all these as one. They stand shoulder to shoulder, they fight side by side; and, when the day comes that they must venture their lives in some great battle or some bitterly contested

skirmish, one grand purpose beats in the heart of all, and they win or die as brothers under the shadow or the splendour of one imperial ideal.

This great war has, in fact, moved all classes to sacrifice and service. And those who, for various reasons, have been unable to carry a rifle and serve in the ranks find opportunities and openings for helpfulness. Amongst the movements that are using the energies of such people, one of the most important at the present is the Y.M.C.A. It is the "Young Men's Christian Association," but the adjective "Young" here is not restricted by any age limit. The only limitation is usefulness, or the reverse. The requisites for successful employment of its resources and opportunities are brains, foresight, knowledge of humanity, strength of constitution, amenity to discipline, and the gift of sound common sense.

It strikes an Association like this that there are multitudes of young men in khaki who are away from home because the liberty of Europe and of our empire is distinctly threatened by a great military ambition equipped with modern scientific methods of warfare; that many of these are free from home influences for the first time in their lives, and the comfort and health of their bodies and souls require to be looked after. They are only too apt to forget the examples of devout Christian parents, and perhaps to fall into evil, from mistaken ideas of what is expected

from a soldier, and because of their inexperience of the temptations that lie in wait for them in strange cities, in nations whose habits are very different from those of our own people, especially in regard to moral relations. And, besides, they are sometimes unsettled, in camps and in barracks, amidst discomforts unspeakable, of mud and cold and rain. Now, the Y.M.C.A. keeps before it as an ideal the facing of all these necessities and difficulties, and the helping, wherever it can, to provide home-like influences which shall hold the life of the young soldier up to the level most desired by those who love him.

How does it set about it?

Well, in a land of war there are certain bases at which troops are kept in great camps after their arrival, until they are sent forward towards the fighting line. They arrive in troopships, sometimes one or two large contingents, often several in one day; and it was a fine thing seeing a troopship coming in. Great liners had been requisitioned by Government, many of them ships which have usually sailed on long oriental voyages. The decks are crowded with the men in full kit; and every dialect of the kingdom may be heard. The fellows are, of course, all interested in the land they have arrived at, though they usually have no idea what town they have reached. The bustle and business of arrival on shore where the French are shouting, and on deck where the Lascars chatter, being got over,

the soldiers are either marched off at once to the Rest Camps, or drawn up in the huge sheds which line the quays. Then the Y.M.C.A. has a busy time. Sometimes thousands pass in a continuous line before the counters of the Association, getting tea and coffee served as fast as the willing hands of the workers can deal these out to them. Then they come back for paper and envelopes, which are given out free of charge; and the soldier is the keenest man at letter-writing on the face of the globe. Of course one can understand this. I always gave out three sheets, for I knew there was usually one for his wife or sweetheart, one for his mother, and one for his chum at home. Sometimes this last takes a curious form. More than one begged that his chum's infant, newborn, should be called after the writer, as a souvenir of the war. Many a poor child will have to face the world oddly labelled!

For the most part, with many, the letter took a long time to evolve. It usually conveyed the information that the writer was "alive and kicking," or that he was "in the pink." But it was very striking to see how a man who could keep up a brisk enough bit of repartee on a London 'bus, or in a bar, would find it almost impossible to scrawl down half a dozen words of a message. One such came to me, and handed in a postcard, on which he had written only the address, and his own regimental number.

I said, "But what is your message?"

"Blowed if I can make one, guvnor," he bashfully muttered. "Yer see, I never wrote a letter in my life, and I've sore muddled my bloomin' brains trying to."

"Why," I replied, "he'll never know who is writing him."

"But it's to my brother!" he protested.

"You haven't even signed your name," said I. "What is it?"

"Bill's my name," he answered, sheepishly.

"Well, then," I asked, "why not write something like this?" And I scribbled,

> "Here I am, safe and sound, on my way to have a slap at my namesake,
>
> BILL."

His face shone with delight, and he gave a sigh of relief. "That's just what I was hunting for!" cried he. And immediately a little crowd pressed forward, holding out their postcards, and crying, "Here, guvnor! Write down that for me. My name's Bill, too."

Officers and men alike are thankful to get some warm food, the chance of stretching their legs after the unaccustomed voyage, and an opportunity of sending back a word or two to those they have left behind in the old country, which, alas! they may probably never see again.

At the camps the same opportunity of warm food and letter-writing awaits them in the

Y.M.C.A. huts. And in all these buildings there is also the social gathering which they so dearly love. At night they settle down to a "Sing-song," the items of the programme being provided by volunteers who send in their names to the chairman. A day in camp would not finish properly without this function. It is, perhaps, not infrequently, an anxious moment when a soldier stands up to sing, but only very occasionally you may be inclined to wish that his were "songs without words." Quaint enough are some of the programmes—a few music-hall ditties, with a chorus, always very heartily sung—some old folk-songs, and some nonsense lyrics. But whatever happens, they must have a chorus, in waltz time if possible. The songs which they enjoy most, are deeply charged up to saturation-point, with sentimentality. The more doleful and dirge-like the better they are appreciated. Once, after a lot of very jolly songs, a most solemn-faced countryman of my own, the only one present, got up and ladled forth, in most lugubrious tones :

> "O why left I my hame?
> Why did I cross the deep?"—

not exactly the most suitable thing for a gathering where many just arrived in camp were still a little home-sick! They love to listen to ballads of the girl who died, or the lonely grave in a distant land, or the long farewell, or some-

thing about a mother's love, with the cottage by the brook thrown in. And always the waltz chorus rocks its way out of the brawny-throated men. At ordinary times they would be considered as "sloppy," but their sentiments are steadily on the side of the oppressed, the lonely, and the dying. The "gods" of a theatre are not more soundly advocates of right, than are the audiences in a soldiers' "Sing-song" in the Y.M.C.A. hut, in the middle of a muddy camp in France.

Some of the camps are amazingly picturesque. No. 6 at Havre is up on the heights, and the whole town lies beneath it. At night the effect of the multitudinous lamps is indescribable. You feel as though you were in the clouds, looking down upon constellations. And then, as you look about you, you see the glow of a fire lighting up a figure or two with the red kiss of its flame, while you hear the low voices in the tents, or you see little shadowy groups of khaki figures moving about. It was sometimes weird to be wakened up in camp by the sentry's sudden challenge, followed perhaps by a ringing shot that stirred the silence of the night. But you knew it was being attended to, and you turned over to sleep again. Each man had his own business, and happy he who knew it there, as elsewhere, the world over!

The Y.M.C.A. has to remember that the life is more than meat. The main purpose of its

mission is spiritual, and it is out to steady the weak, and to try to win souls for Christ. Certainly you can serve God by dishing out coffee or tea to hungry men in khaki; but you cannot forget that there is also a soul in khaki, for whom God's Son died on Calvary. And these souls are going on soon, away beyond your reach, into the front of battle. You saw them drawn up, morning after morning, in the miry ways, shoulder to shoulder, with all their equipment on; and you have entirely missed the mark of your purpose if you have not tried to touch their hearts for Christ. Brave fellows! they all know what it means. They are up against the greatest truths of life and death. They are thinking of things too deep for words. When you have taken up the meeting at the close of the evening, and when, all together, they have sung some of the simple songs of faith out of the little treasury of Christian hymns, and you have spoken of the things of the soul, you can feel, as if you passed your hand over their hearts, that they know, that they are remembering, and that they have been near to life's solemnities. Then that great hymn, which should, in a very special sense, be a soldier's hymn in such a time as this—

> Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
> Lead Thou me on.
> The night is dark, and I am far from home,
> Lead Thou me on!—

how it hushes, and moves the souls that are far from home! And to-morrow they are going on towards Eternity, never to be seen again by you, perhaps, till you meet them with Christ.

Some of the fellows come up and thank you for your words of remembrance, slipping into your hand a message they have scribbled on a scrap of paper on their knees during the last hymn—a word or a phrase—"Good-bye—God bless you!" or "God be with you till we meet again!" And just their name and regimental number, it may be, at the foot. Or perhaps they ask you to drop a note to their mother, or wife, or one as dear; and it is a fine thing to be able to help them so. It melts your heart to take their messages. "Tell my mother—or my wife—or my sweetheart—that I am a true man—that I am going to do my best—that I am not forgetting." Or, frequently, "Tell my wife that I have learned the truth out here. I am a changed person—I have given my soul to Him who died for me!" There is the rustle of angels' wings sometimes about the camps out there.

Thus men learn the value of discipline, of self-surrender, of brave willingness to do and to give in service and in sacrifice; and, above all, the deep value, for the human soul, of the sacred memories of home. At the same time the Y.M.C.A. and kindred Associations are examples of these very graces. For those who serve tea and coffee, and who labour in all the varied fields

of work, are voluntary helpers. They also are from all ranks of society, from every profession and class. But they have laid aside every distinction for the happiness of doing things for others, of helping and comforting those who are far from home, and of trying to deepen in a great crisis the sense of the nearness of the Unseen, the Eternal, and the Ideal.

There is no higher work, and everybody at home who prays at all, should have a prayer over, or a little corner to spare in the prayers they already have, for such work and such workers.

IV

My work began at Havre, the chief British base, and landing-place of the troops; and it consisted, in the first place, of meeting the ships, speaking to the men, cheering and strengthening them as they felt far from home, and perhaps a little downcast over the unknown risks that faced them. Then, in the evenings, I had to go to the camps, or to the great sheds at the docks, and speak to the men as they were gathered in the huts or tents. Later, I passed on through the camps about Rouen, Dieppe, Abbeville—the British Advanced Base—and Boulogne; and then back to Havre and Harfleur.

There were several very interesting men, ready to talk, but quite apparently not talking at large. And words by an eye-witness are always of weight. They were keenly quick to the lessons of the conflict. We learned much from them of the various aspects of war.

One was suffering from nerve-shock, a shell having buried him in a trench. This man said, "Well, there's nothing like war to test a true man's kindness. There's one chap, and if ever I come across him or anyone belonging to him,

I'll lift my hat—I'll help to carry his kit all the way he goes. It was up at —— and the Germans enfiladed our trench, so we had to run. There was a wood through which we fled. Every tree in it had been cut down by shell fire—a terrible 'criss-cross' bit of obstacle race it made; and as I ran, I stumbled and fell. The wood was being searched in all directions by bullets; but a man ahead of me, whom I did not know, and who didn't belong to my corps, hearing me fall, came back, stooped over me, and said, 'Are you hit, old chap?' 'No,' I replied. 'I'll be all right in a moment. You look out for yourself.' But he wouldn't go until he saw me up again. Now, that man came back to me at the risk of his life. Every step he took was through the hissing chance of death. And he was no chum of mine. But he did a thing I never can forget, and probably never can repay."

Another man said, "I had an experience of the opposite kind, pretty strange, too, not a common thing, thank God!—one of selfishness. We were ordered forward, and had to dig ourselves in at once. I had lost my tool, but there was a fellow on my right who had dug himself into quite a decent bit of cover. 'Lend me your claw, chum!' said I. But he replied, 'No. You should have looked after your own!' The chap on my left was digging for all he was worth, but he said, 'Here, mate, take mine!' The

other fellow, perhaps a little ashamed, growled out, 'You never can tell when you'll need it yourself!' But as he rose a bit to say that, he was caught straight in the forehead with a bullet. He didn't need his 'digger' any more!"

This last fellow gave me some Belgian cartridges from Mons. He was very strong on that episode. Certainly it was a "near shave," and only brilliance of generalship with dogged soldierliness amongst the men, brought us through a terrible time. The pursuit was intensely bitter, vindictive, and insatiable. It was a miracle, in fact, that the whole force was not exterminated or taken. There never was anything in British history more full of the risk of imperial disaster, and at the same time richer with opportunities and examples of beautiful comradeship and devotion to duty.

War, however, not only teaches self-denial and sacrifice, but it seems to place things in new settings, making what are, to us, stupendous matters appear quite ordinary, and just what ought to be. For example, you meet men whose actions have been recorded with highest praise by their generals, and yet they themselves seem to be almost incredulous of their own outstanding bravery. At one camp a man was pointed out to me as having won the medal for distinguished conduct on the field. He was a Scotsman, so I went up and spoke to him.

"You've been doing a great thing," said I. "And I'm glad to hear it of a fellow-countryman."

"Hoots!" he replied. "It was naething but what every man would hae done. I dinna think I'd hae spoken to anybody I kent, if he wadna hae done the same."

And I asked him what it was.

"Ye see," he said, "we were in a house, and the Germans were batterin' it to bits. Mysel' and my officer was left, and it was time to clear out, for it was comin' aboot our ears. And he was struck doon, poor lad! wounded terrible sair. I looked at him, and he was still breathin'. 'Lod,' thinks I, 'I canna leave you here—and yet ye're a great muckle fellow. I wonder if I could gie ye a heeze on my shouthers and run!' So I up wi' him, and out like a shot, the house just crumblin' crash upon our heels. Short after that another officer said to me, when we were in a ticht corner, 'Lend me your shouther, man—I think I've put my ankle oot.' I lent him my shouther, but the lad couldna walk a step, so I carried him. And it happened that his ankle had been broken through wi' a shot! They made a terrible fuss about it. But it was naething but what ony man wad hae done for a fellow-craitur. Was it no' than?"

And, as one looked around at the men gathered there, one felt that the same quiet purposeful modesty would have been found in them

all. For among the realities of war is the prominent fact that fuss is entirely absent. Men out yonder, within the echo of the guns, are too near the tangling roots of life and death to think of posturing, or of how they would look in the limelight. The thing is done, once and for all; it is the right thing to do, and the man nearest to it does it. That is all.

It was most interesting to get a really nice fellow to talk of his experiences. One of the London Scottish, who was in an affair of theirs which was spoken of as a charge, told me it was not so much a charge as a scrambling fight for life. They were ordered up to occupy trenches, and this was done in the day-time, instead of in the dark, as usual. The result was that they were exposed to a heavy fire, suffering considerably. The Germans came at them, as he put it —"just like the Crystal Palace coming out on a Saturday afternoon,"—and they had to be rushed. This man was one of a small group of forty-seven, only seventeen of whom came out of the affair alive. They just flung themselves at the enemy, and cut their way through, and back again to help their comrades, for the Germans were round about them. He confessed that he was in a real funk, but he shut his eyes and went at his man, knowing that unless he succeeded somehow in killing him right off he could never hope to be able to fight him. After that he feared nothing. Only three of the

seventeen now survive. He saw Dr MacNab, the Harley Street specialist, bayoneted in the head and killed, while attending to a wounded German !

The camps were terrible all winter—wet, cold, and muddy ; but the fellows did not mind. At Harfleur they were busy putting up huts for the men. The mud at that camp was absolutely terrible, rolling in liquid horror. I had a very interesting talk with an old Irishman, who was standing on a bit of corrugated iron, to keep himself from sinking through the mire to Australia. He was typical of many. His term of service had expired just the day of the declaration of war, and he had been retained. "Of coorse," said he, "I'd have been here annyways, for the king and country must be kep' up, you know!" And then he went into many details of the origin of the war, discussing the "neuter-ality" of Belgium, the valour of the Russians, the importance of the Carpathian passes, and the like. The war does seem to have taught geography, and perhaps a little French, to the British world. Every soldier seems to know the configuration of the world, down to the last detail, and is impressed with the fact that the foreigner is much under-educated since he has not got the length of learning English !

The spirit of the men in the trenches was entirely indomitable, and certain episodes com-

bined pathos and humour in an extraordinary degree. Truly, if you wish to meet the optimists, seek for them out there! The experience of one man I know is an example of this. Between his trench and the German position a farmhouse stood. His chum, with great daring, scrambled out and ran over to one of the cottages to make tea, which he brought back to his comrades; and, in the midst of shot and shell they shared the luxury, without milk or sugar. The bombardment became more intense and deadly. The farm crumpled into ruins, and a windmill went ablaze. Two or three cows which were in the farm perished in the flames. It was, of course, impossible to rescue them. The boys were very sorry for the suffering of the animals, but they could not resist passing round the word that if the German chef did not look out, the roast-beef would be spoilt for supper! On another occasion the same culinary hero went across to the house, which meant about a hundred yards of careful trekking, to make some tea. Just when the fellows in the trench were expecting that it should be ready, the enemy's shell fell all around the building. One went through the roof; and then they saw the hero coming out, as hard as he could run, with the bucket of tea. Just as he got near the trench a shell fell right in front of him, and he flopped down. Then all the fellows jumped up shouting, "Mind the tea, Willie!" And he minded it;

for he managed to bring it in with him, for his chums!

Next day my friend himself took the turn of going over also to make the tea, and he said, "I very nearly cried when I saw that house. It would have broken your heart. There was a baby's washing hanging on a line across the kitchen. The eight-day clock was still ticking in the corner. There was a canary in a cage upon the wall. Poor little mite! it chirped quite cheerily when it saw us. So we foraged about till we found some seed for it; we put a decent feed in, and gave it some water." They then put some potatoes in a pot upon the fire to boil, but suddenly had to retire to their post in the trenches and leave the potatoes boiling. He said that all the time they were blazing at the Germans they could not help hoping the potatoes were not boiling away to waste!

During this trench vigil, a little baby was born in his own household at home, and his wife sent out a photograph of the infant, which he stuck up in the trench on a muddy shelf in front of him. Every morning from along the fighting line the message came, "Good-morning! How's the kid?"

Day after day passed by in this atmosphere of humour and kindliness in the brotherhood of strenuous fight, but one afternoon a fellow, standing by with a spade on his shoulder, drew the fire of the enemy. A bullet hit the spade,

ricochetted at a remarkable angle, entered my friend's thigh, struck off on a journey of its own, and wormed its way up till it stuck fast in his vertebrae. That finished his warfare for some time; till, at home, an eminent surgeon cut down upon the bullet, and chiselled it out. "I'll get it made into a brooch for the wife!" said he, pallid with suffering, but longing to be back again among his fellows.

One heard everywhere of the irresistible attraction which the Red Cross seemed to have for the enemy's artillery. The sight of an ambulance or a church in which the wounded were lying seemed to inflame them into absolute fury,—a procedure which must brand their name with eternal infamy. And yet it was no new experience, for, just because of the same thing in the campaign of 1870, General Trochu at last removed the French wounded from under the protection of the Red Cross flag and put the Prussian wounded in their place.

The terrible havoc wrought in Belgium stirred the hearts of the soldiers to the very depths. One man, on the transport service, said, "It makes our hearts bleed to see the towns and villages we motor through, as we carry provisions to the firing line by day and night,—the churches and the houses burned down, the poor inhabitants wandering about, some with large families, not knowing where to go. We saw one poor woman digging a grave in her garden, to bury

her two children, who had been shot by the Germans."

We could not help being impressed by the force of custom. Said one, "A bomb dropped in front of our convoy, giving us a bit of a fright, but we have got used to them now, and to the roar of the guns. In fact, if we did not hear them we would think something was wrong!"

Another said, "We were cut off in a skirmish, and the few that were left had to scatter. My chum and I looked at each other, and I said to Sandy, 'We must make a bolt for it.' As we ran through the village, the wind of a shell lifted us off our feet and we thought we were done for; but when we found we weren't dead, we shook hands with ourselves, and off again like lightning!"

Directness of experience gives directness of expression, and the quaintness of the soldier's phrase only intensifies and visualizes the episode. In fact, sometimes one is struck very forcibly by the way in which a common soldier is lifted by a crisis such as this into real poetry. A very dear friend of mine was killed among the Canadians at Ypres in the great struggle for the guns, in the middle of May. "Don't worry," said one man to me. "He died like a brave man, in a brave man's fight, along with the brave. They cut their way into the heart of the German host, and retook the guns, before they died." And

somehow, sorrow lost its edge, in the thought. A comrade, a common soldier, wrote how they had just almost dug themselves in, when a bullet wounded himself and passed through the body of the other. "We lay side by side all night in the moonlight," said he, "and in the dawn I left him, lying on his face as if he were asleep." It is a picture full of unconscious artistry, the voice of truest feeling.

The reality of war can only be brought home to the people here by the direct touch of those who are in it. Thus a friend in charge of an Ambulance train wrote:

"Some of the sights I saw in the early days of the war I never can forget. After the wounded were all in I used to pack up any empty waggons with refugees. What these could carry represented all their remaining worldly possessions. Pray God that our own country may never know the horrors of war, and the suffering inflicted by invasion upon the inhabitants! I often thought, looking at these stricken crowds, what it would mean if war came to our towns in England and Scotland."

After a battle comes the terrible trial of the entraining of wounded, and this is best shown by the statement of a friend of mine, who was in charge of such an operation.

"As a preliminary my train lay two miles outside the town of ——, there being no vacant siding for us. The fighting front was almost

parallel with the railway line, and about six or seven miles away. The surrounding country was flat, with a low ridge of hills in the distance. With the naked eye we could see a German captive balloon floating in the air, evidently acting as an observation post for their artillery fire. The roar of guns was continuous, and all along the ridge of hills we could see the smoke balls of bursting shrapnel. It was a beautifully clear, sunny afternoon, and we could see our aeroplanes passing along the position, often almost lost to sight by the smoke of the shrapnel fired at them by anti-aeroplane guns. At one time I saw eight aeroplanes at once, two of them chasing a Taube. I will never waste any money at Hendon again! I have a good pair of Zeiss glasses, and it was really thrilling to watch the aeroplanes working. We watched this till dusk; and then the train moved forward into the railway station.

"It would require a Zola to describe the scene there. Very little light—all the platforms crowded with refugees—shells falling with terrific noise in a distant part of the town—all the entrances and waiting-rooms full of stretchers with wounded in them; and every available corner crowded with wounded that could walk. The air was quivering under the shock of heavy guns firing about half a mile from us; so much so that I had to have all the carriage windows opened to prevent the glass being broken. The

work of entraining the wounded began. The extreme value of organisation was never more proved or more highly tested than it was that night. Half-way through our task shrapnel began to fall about a hundred yards away, and this excited the unfortunate refugees, who were crowding into special trains as fast as they could. By 10 p.m. we had completely filled the train, and evacuated nearly four hundred cases, one-third of which were stretcher cases. Off we moved for our destination, and began the work of washing, reclothing, dressing wounds, resetting fractures; and, last but not least, feeding our patients. Twelve hours later, by the time we had reached our base, every wound was dressed, and a nominal roll of patients was ready, while every patient was suitably clothed and clean. Detraining took some six hours, and in another ten hours all suitable cases were in England, the slightly wounded and those unfit for ship transit having been sent to hospitals at the base. A fresh supply of stores had been obtained, food, medical comforts, and dressings; and we were on our way up to the Front again. This is a very condensed description of what occurs to us every thirty-six hours. The evacuation and treatment of our sick and wounded is a phase of the war of which we will have reason to be very proud when the history comes to be written, and which must very materially conduce to the success of field operations of the troops."

One came across some miraculous excapes. In fact, in modern warfare almost any escape was miraculous. One notable case was that of a man who was in a trench when a great "Jack Johnston" burst in front of it. The trench blew in, and several fellows were killed and buried. When this man was flung into the living grave which thus overwhelmed him, the tails of his great-coat were left outside, and bore witness to the infernal rain of shrapnel, for it was simply riddled with holes. When he was dug out he was deaf and dumb, and he has not yet recovered.

Another poor soul had a very startling experience. One leg was completely removed close up to the body, the other was off by the knee, and his left eye was torn out. The doctors gave up all hope of him. "But, you see," said he, "I wasn't good enough to go yet!"

His first intimation that he was hurt was also the first hint that he had not been killed, for he woke up out in the field in the dark to hear himself groaning in pain. The Germans came up to him, and one, in a very English voice, said, "Get up out of this!"

"I cannot move," he groaned.

And the beast prodded him with his rifle, just at the groin, where the worst of his wounds was, till he screamed in agony.

"Take him away to the farm," said the torturer.

So he was carried off on a stretcher, and flung into an outhouse, near which the battle had taken place; and there he was left without any attention, and without any dressings. Gangrene set in. Our people next day shelled the farm, and took it by storm at the point of the bayonet. There they found three British soldiers lying with wounds that were putrid as the result of Teutonic cruelty!

The ambulance waggons also, speeding through the streets or to the camp hospital, with passing glimpses of bandaged forms lying limp within them, solemnized the sunshine, and made the merriest feel grave for a while. The sorrow and anxiety of the world beat in often upon our life. An anxious-faced man would meet you wondering how he could manage to see his son. Or, after some crushing battle experience, a letter charged with agony would ask, "Can you find out where my boy is lying? Could you arrange to have a cross put up to mark his resting-place?" As if even this affectionate mark of tender remembrance were possible, when for many a day to come the field in which he fell would be swept by devastating storm of deadly shell!

In one of the worst days of early spring the hearts of the men in the trenches were broken nigh to tears as they heard above their fighting a lark's song in the sky. We sometimes think we hear thus, in the lull of the fighting, the song

of the promise of peace again. But alas! before such a realization there will be many a long grave, and the harvests of France and Belgium will be enriched with the blood of our dearest and best.

V

THOUGH we were not without our times of yearning, being of course very humanly Scottish, yet there were some things that uplifted us, in the land of war, and gave us strength to be patient and hopeful, linking us with home. One of these was the meeting of boys we knew, on their way off to "somewhere in France."

One day I heard of the presence of some kilted lads up in one of the camps, new arrivals, whose advent had missed our notice, and who were going off next day. So I motored up, and made for the Y.M.C.A. hut. There are over four hundred lads away from my own church, so I was not astonished that the first man I ran against at the doorway was one of my own Bible Class at home. Inside, there were more of them, from the Choir, the Bible Class, the Guild, and the Parish, all looking hardy and fit, glowing in the very best manliness. We might have been in the King's Park at Edinburgh, instead of in a camp in France, resting for a night, ere departure for the fighting line. We had a Scottish "Sing-song" that time, the Welsh, English, and Irish present standing aside for their Scottish brethren

The mothers, sweethearts, and wives at home have reason to be proud of the gift of brave manhood they have given, withholding their tears, for the liberty of the world, and the honour of God. Next morning at six o'clock I was on my way to the camp, and marched down behind the pipes, along to the station, and saw them off. My heart went with them, but I had to go away back and comfort and strengthen some of the many pouring in continually to take their places in the line of battle also.

Another episode that linked me on to home came into my experience, when one morning early I heard the bagpipes in the great boulevard off the street in which I was living. How much that means to the Highland heart! In a flash I saw the gleam of Hebridean seas, and the peaks of Skye dreaming in the starlight. I rushed to the window, but the music stopped. It was the march of the Camerons the pipers had been playing. In a few minutes, however, on they came again, the brave lads of the tartan. So I leaned out with my pipes and played the march of the Camerons to them till the last man went by. How they cheered, and waved their bonnets as they went, glad to be welcomed in a strange land by the strains they knew.

Then, again, came the Gordons, a whole big battalion of them, men to be proud of, broad-bosomed men, clear-eyed, lithe and large of limb. It was a joy to talk to them. There was a

University Company amongst them, and one man had, folded up in his sporran, a copy of Delitzsch's edition of the Psalms in Hebrew, to read in the train! That was a typically Scottish touch. You cannot get away, even to-day, from John Knox's dream of a school in every Scottish parish.

Another very striking link was, when one day, after a short service in a shed, with an English regiment going to the Front, I turned and found one of my own elders of St Stephen's standing by my side. We waited, and watched the men marching out. It was a very moving thought that these were ready to give what was dearest to them for our sakes. I wish the people at home could see how bravely and unblenchingly these fellows move on to the superlative sacrifice. Will they ever be forgotten? What can ever repay them for what they suffer and achieve?

But there are other things also worth the telling. I went out not long since to a grey camp on the slope of a hill, miry, cold, and cheerless. A keen wind piercingly filled each nook and cranny with invincible and unavoidable discomfort. The men, mud-covered, and blue with cold, their shoulders hunched up in the endeavour to find warmth under their khaki overcoats, were moving about aimlessly. The sentry at the canteen, stamping his feet, was yearning for the hour of relief that seemed scarcely to crawl towards him

through the sodden clay. Not a spot was there into which the chill wind could not penetrate—not a corner around which it did not whirl to find the victim of its torment.

The hut which I was visiting was as cheerless as could be. The air hung like a wet sheet, for coldness, in it. The boards were loose-fitting, the floor sagging on the mud—a poor hut, poorly built, and draughty. But that night, for an hour before the doors are thrown open, there would be a long line outside, standing in the mire, shivering; and then, with a rush, men from every country of the home-land would fill the place, till it steamed with perspiring humanity, and the atmosphere would be thick with the acrid smoke of *Woodbine* cigarettes. These are the soldier's stand-by, friend, and comforter. Give him a *Woodbine* in his teeth, and he will endure with scarce a groan the weary aching jolt of the ambulance train carrying him down from the front; or when, without an anæsthetic, some terrible ordeal has to be faced immediately, he will grip the little "fag" tight, and, clutching the edge of the table, face the very worst at the surgeon's hands. The *Woodbine* is his constant anodyne in war's sore agony. Surely, better stuff than the British soldier never grappled with pain and death anywhere!

Just as I was about to pass on to another place, a couple of men of the Black Watch came round the corner. They were tough little fellows

of the Ghurka build, Highland in every line and limb. They touched their bonnets and said,

"We're going off to the Front to-night, sir. And we thought we'd like to have the Sacrament before we go. Can you give it to us?"

"How many?" I asked.

"Oh, maybe sixteen," was the reply.

"Well," I answered, "at six o'clock in the shed next to this one, be present, with your friends."

Off went the two, with a deepened light in their faces, while I prepared the place that was to be for some of them the room of the Last Supper. A tablecloth, borrowed from the officer's mess, and a little wine from the same source, helped out our preparations. A notice on the door that the place was closed for ordinary use until the Communion Service was over, did not keep us free from interruption, for the room was the ordinary one for the soldiers' "Sing-song," and men would come and beat upon the doors, and clamour for admission, not reading notices, nor at first understanding.

There was a very special reason why I welcomed the experience. For, some years ago, in my first Parish, I realized how many, laid aside by sickness or old age, were unable to share in that service which is so precious to our Scottish folk. And I used to go on each Communion Sunday into the little homes in the lanes, or away across the moors, to some

quiet bothy, carrying the sacred symbols of divine brotherhood, and so linking on the lonely to the wider community, setting the solitary in families. And the Girls' Class of St Stephen's had heard of it, and given me a chaste little set of Communion vessels for the purpose. And now these were to receive a very deep consecration. They were to be brought into living touch with the sacrifice of the bravest of our imperial manhood, in this the greatest conflict of opposing ideals which the world has ever seen.

The men began to gather, and sat down there as reverently as though the dim draughty hut were the chancel of some great cathedral, holy with the deepest memories of Christian generations. "You might wait," whispered one. "Some of the Camerons and Seaforths may be able to come." So we waited—a hushed and solemn band. Then quietly, some of them began to croon old psalm memories, and hymns, waiting. And after a while the others came, stepping softly into the place; and with them comrades who explained that, though they were of a different country and a different church belief, they yet desired to share in the act of worship preparatory to celebration. At length about one hundred and twenty men were there, and we began. It was the Twenty-third Psalm, the Psalm of God's shepherding, the comradeship of the Divine in the Valley of the Shadow, the faith and the hope of the brave.

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill,
For Thou art with me."

What a power was in it—what a spell of wonder, of comforting and uplifting in this land of war! They sang it very tenderly, for it spoke to them of times when they had held their mothers' hands, and looked up in their faces, in the church at home, wondering why tears were there, as the dear old hearts remembered. Some of them also—the tears were on their cheeks as they sang that old psalm, very precious in the homeland, very precious here; and it is a soul-shaking thing to see a strong man's tears. It was surely thus our fathers sang, in quiet places, and by foreign streams, when to be true to the faith committed to them meant outcasting, exile, and death.

It means a big thing still, to-day, for our empire, this heart-deep singing of our soldier men. I have never deamed that I should see such depth of feeling for eternal things. Do not tell me this is Armageddon. It is not the end of things. It is Resurrection and Pentecost we are passing through. A harvest is being sown in France of which the reaping shall be empire-wide. There will be angels at that in-gathering.

It only needed the simplest words to seal that Sacrament. And next morning, in the grey light, the men who had been touched by the

thought of home and the dear ones there, and the big throbbing thought of consecration, were marching off to grip the very hand of death, in sacrifice, like Christ's, for others.

I shall never see such wonder of faith again. It is a consecrated memory—the gloomy hut, in the silent camp, the strong men bowed and weeping under the urgent influence of the spirit of God.

Only a night or two later, we had another link with higher things. It was in a tent, a big marquee, where the Y.M.C.A. was busy selling tea and coffee as we entered.

"We are going off to-morrow," said a fine lad from Cheshire. "Give us Communion, that we may remember when we go, that high ideals call us."

It was a difficult thing, just for a moment, to decide whether it should be held in that tent where men were noisily eating and drinking at the counter, or in some quiet place apart. Instinctively I said, "Yes. Here." So a rude communion-table was made, of boxes heaped together, as our fathers would heap stones together in the moors. We laid upon that table covered with a white linen cloth, the little chalice of silver, with the flagon of red wine, and the bread upon its platter, expecting eight men to partake. But the tent filled and hushed, and filled to overflowing; and, even outside, men stood and peered in through the seams. Men

raised their drooping heads and stretched out their hands for the sacred symbols.

Away up in the trenches, and about the region of La Bassee, red blood, as red as Christ's, was enriching the soil of France; and the hearts that were beating here might soon be still, in the long graves yonder. A breath of mystery seemed to sway them in that tent; and still that quiet urgency for more came up, until over three hundred men, whose faces to-morrow would be set towards the battle, had partaken of the Sacrament of Sacrifice that linked us to God and our homes across the sea.

I cannot forget the little orderly who helped me. He was hardly more than a boy, but he was going off with the others, where death would run after him and death's chances jostle him, and the thought lifted him suddenly into big manhood with the rest.

"Will you give it to me, sir, too?" he asked. And I gave him the bread, but in the storm of my feelings I for a moment forgot to give him the wine when the cup came back at last. Suddenly, as the men were singing, I remembered, and turning round held it out to him. I see him yet, drawing himself up to attention. He put his hand to his cap, as he would honour his earthly king, and saluted ere he took the symbol of the blood of the King of Love. And yet another time, I do remember, when a little band of workers in a camp beyond

the British Advanced Base sent to me early in the morning begging that themselves might share in the touch of consecration of the Table of the Lord. These are things of eternal moment, unforgettable, in hours when life looked in at one window and saw death looking in at the other.

Talk of our churches, our sects, our quarrelsome divisions! When men are face to face with the Eternal as we were out there, these things are as forgotten as the dust that blew last year, over the remotest sand-heap, into the Atlantic. Brotherhood in the divine uplifting of a great imperial call, and the love of a uniting Christship binds, as with a golden girdle, all our hopes, our faiths, and our fears, and links them to the Highest.

These are the children of sacrifice. The light of God was on their faces. To-day the dust of Belgium may be mingling with their dust. But the grass will grow along the fields of conflict, and new hopes will spring in the ruined land of Belgium, where these lie sleeping.

Out yonder there is not only unity of purpose, but unity of seeking, and unity of faith. I have seen a man at my services with the Roman Catholic Rosary in his hand—I have seen one kiss the Crucifix in prayer. Baptists, Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, the one great need crushed us all on to our knees before the one God.

I found especially the Anglican Chaplains

keen and eager to fall into line with all that was good. They forgot their uniform. They were true men of God, first and last. More than one said to me, "We see things here in a different perspective. All the little things are lost in the greatness of the love of Christ, for these toiling, suffering men." I saw this especially in a conference for which I was summoned back from Boulogne to talk to the workers. The Anglican Chaplains came, the Army Scripture Readers, and every kind of lay worker, and each heart spoke of the deeply wonderful experience which God is giving men out yonder in the Land of War.

VI

PERHAPS the thing that impressed one most was the continual movement, without hurry, without bustle, without excitement, every man guided by stern resolve, with thorough knowledge of what was required of him, and ready for the supreme sacrifice. We continually had reason to be proud of our race. I do not believe it had struck any of us that such masses of splendid men were still to be found in our country—men like the Sherwood Foresters, the Gordons, the Camerons, massive, muscular, and in every way fit.

I cannot forget one afternoon when a fine detail of the Gordons came in. The Captain was a well-known Banffshire man, and I believe as handsome as ever I saw in the Highland dress. His Lieutenant was a quiet youth, in appearance little more than a lad. As I was leaving the shed at the docks where they had arrived I said to the Captain, "It does one's heart good to see men like you."

He at once asked, "Are you a Scotsman?"

"Of course I am," I replied, "or I wouldn't be here, so far from home, interfering with other people's business."

As we parted I said to him, "Now give the enemy a good bang when you come up to him."

And he lapsed into broadest Doric as he replied, "Haud yer tongue! I've a hantle hefty loons here, and gin we get a breenge at them we'll gie them a gey fleg."

At Neuve Chapelle they got their "breenge," and there the young Lieutenant lies to-day enfolded in the long sleep, while the brave Captain fell, sorely wounded, at the head of the shot-rent remnant of his men. His was a strong personality, and as one man said of him, to me, "There isn't one of these fine kilted fellows who would not follow him to the death." And they proved the truth of the statement.

He was the first of the officers I had seen with knapsack, rifle, and bayonet; and it was very strange indeed to see them marching in the ranks with the men.

My duty was most of all with the Scottish soldiers, but I tried to do something for all.

At the same time one could not help feeling that one's countrymen could be very amusing. For example I met one who tickled me very much. I said, "You are Scotch!"

"How did you know that I was Scoatch?" he asked. "Ah've been away from Scoatland as loang as ah've been un it."

"Oh," I said, "I observed some lingering traces of the accent about your speech, and I was naturally interested."

"Well," said he, to a friend standing by, "That's vairy remawrkable, for ah'd have thought that I had loang since shed my nawtionality!"

He was the quaintest thing I have seen—so broad in speech that you could almost have tumbled over his vowels, and yet flattering himself that he was English! He had, of course, no humour.

"I don't like this fog," I said.

"Noh," replied he, very deliberately. "A foag is always vairy *misty*-fying." And he quite evidently didn't mean it for a joke! He was just a bag of meal, very dry, and very decent; but certainly not a very interesting companion.

A very amusing episode occurred at Etretat, which served to illustrate the dangers of ultra-nationalism. Mr Furness Williams, the famous Welsh singer, was with me, along with some Englishmen, and we were poking fun at one another's country. He especially was defending his nation from the common slur implied in the ancient rhyme of the delinquencies of Taffy, who was a Welshman, and who had been tempted a little beyond the grip of the ten commandments by the appeal of beef to his primitive instincts. In my national weakness I stepped forward to the first soldier I saw, who happened to have a Highland bonnet on, and I asked, "What Scottish regiment do you belong to?"

And he said, "I belong to the Artillery."

I replied, "But what part of Scotland do you come from?"

"Oh," was his answer, "I'm not a Scotsman at all. I'm a Welshman."

"How then," I asked, "are you wearing a Scotch bonnet?"

"Oh," he said, a little shamefacedly. "It doesn't belong to me."

And Mr Williams admitted that it was very hard, that, after proving so satisfactorily, as he had done, that the imputation of dishonesty was a slander on the Welsh nation, it should happen that the first man we met in Etretat was a Welshman, wearing another man's cap!

A very interesting time I had was an evening spent with the Indians. These were always pathetic figures, in the chill winter of France. They did not like it. More than once in our meetings some Indian Christians were present, singing the hymns along with their fellows, in a wonderful unity. How strikingly Christ obliterates questions of colour and race. On this occasion there were about five hundred of them, crammed into a small hut, and sitting on the floor. A little space was left in the centre for the interpreter, Mr Benjamin, of the Indian Y.M.C.A., and myself. I was not, of course, to speak of religion to them, and it was as difficult at first to think what was to be said, as writing a letter which would satisfy the censor. So I fell back on the bagpipes. I told the men how splendid

it was to be fighting together for the liberty of the world; and that we were interested in them, for they had a fighting record like our own. I told them how sorry I was that I could not show them a photograph of our enemies, as these usually ran from us, just as they did from the Ghurkas, so fast that we could not see their faces. Then I told them things about Scotland and the Scottish people, and asked if anybody present would play the bagpipes. No reply was vouchsafed, so I had to play them myself, but I carefully watched the crowd, that I might discover if there was a piper amongst them. Sure enough, I saw one man being nudged by the others; so, when I had finished, I laid my pipes upon his knee. He rose and saluted, and then he played *Highland Laddie*. When he was done, another came forward, and played *Hey Johnnie Cope*, and *Gin I were whaur Gadie rins*. A third one, a little man in a great big overcoat, then came forward and very solemnly played *Comin' thro' the Rye*. They handed back the bagpipes to me with the usual complimentary speeches—that they were the finest they had ever handled, the sweetest they had ever heard, and so forth!

I found the bagpipes not only a means of introduction to the men, but on more than one occasion they served as a pass to carry me past those terrible French bayonets which look so uncannily convenient for raking out one's ribs. On

one occasion I had not my military pass with me, but I simply held up the bagpipes in the face of the stern French officer who challenged me. Whenever he saw the ribbon-bedecked instrument, he said, "Ah, oui, l'Écossais!" and allowed me to go on.

The French were intensely interested in Scotland and the Scottish people, and friendships were very easily struck up between our soldiers and our allies. The Celtic memory is a long memory, and the French at any rate have not forgotten that the alliance between them and our nation is the oldest in Europe.

The Scot is calm, without being phlegmatic; and not only when duty calls, but when sudden and swift emergency arises. While ready and willing to face everything, he was just as ready to be perfectly honest in the declaration of his feelings. If he had "gone through the mill" at Mons he would candidly tell you he was not keen to be in it again, though he would "like another lick at them." Sometimes one met a fellow more "pawkie," though just as candid. For example, at one camp I struck up the acquaintance of a military policeman whom I frequently met on the road. He was very fond of speaking of his home, and those dear to him there. I observed one day that he had no teeth whatever in his upper jaw, and I asked him why he did not get such a matter attended to.

"Well, sir," he replied, "I had a good set of

false teeth when I left home, and I lost them at Mons. I could get a good set if I cared, but I'm a little too old, and I've had my day, and I am getting along fine as I am. I'll wait till the war is over now, unless they can't do without me."

Naturally Dundee was strongly in evidence in France—the Black Watch look faithfully after that. It was very interesting to find out from the men where they came from. Frequently they did not seem to catch what was intended, as when I would ask some very Scotch-looking boy :

"Well, where do you come from?"

And he would solemnly reply, "India."

But the older and more experienced men would say, "That's no what he means, Johnny. Whaur do ye belong to?" Then with a knowing look, as though he were saying something very humorous, he would reply :

"Oh, ay—I come from a small place called Dundee."

Of course, the Scotsman's shy reticence sometimes found expression very strongly, in a characteristic way. For instance, at a remote camp, I saw a solitary soldier standing near the door, just as he would stand at a church meeting at home,—a monument of "blateness." One of our men went up to him and chatted for a little, then coming across to me he said, "That man knows you well." I went over and at once recognized him, although it is not easy, of course, immediately to identify a man with a passing

glance when he is in khaki. We chatted for a minute or two, and then I said to him :

"Why didn't you speak to me?"

In the most shamefaced way he replied, "It's no my place!" And this away in a foreign land, in a hut where he was an entire stranger!

The French carry their interest in Scotland sometimes to extremes. Especially are they interested over the bagpipes,—"la musique Écossaise." The excitement with which they welcome the ancient instrument is really remarkable. When I went out to France I took my bagpipes with me, and now and again in a camp "Sing-song" I found a Scotsman or two willing to perform upon them. The most skilful I met in this way was a young corporal in the Cameron Highlanders, who not only filled in an evening with several masterpieces of pipe-music, to the delight of the hut, but left the bagpipes in such order that they seemed just tingling of themselves to play. As I was going back by tram to Havre I carried them under my arm. When I boarded the car I was the only passenger, and the conductor came through to the front platform begging me for a tune. I did not mind, although I felt it was very late, so I screwed up, not anticipating what was to happen. The driver stopped at once, and he and the conductor, with their heads to the side, gave a nodding accompaniment to the strain. In a moment all the earth seemed to have got out of bed—men, women,

and children, young and old, rushed out into the dark, from houses, shops, and cafés. Some, with their chests sticking out, marched to and fro; others joined hands, and footed it most grotesquely, while others boarded the car, listened to the drones, and discussed the Scottish nation. When the conductor and the driver suddenly remembered their duty and started off on their journey again, many remained as passengers and were carried along with us. When we arrived at a junction we found another car waiting to get on to our line. Our officials very obligingly stopped in order that the others might share the benefit of the Scottish music. The passengers leaned out shaking hands with one another, the wildest gabble going on all the while to the accompaniment of the *79th's Farewell to Gibraltar!* The 79th were not willingly allowed to get away; but, just as we were on the move again, two Scottish soldiers managed to fight their way out to the front of the crowd, one of them shouting, "Hey,—what's your regiment? Whaur do ye belang tae?"

His comrade, observing my clerical collar, remonstrated, "Jock, dinna say that! Do ye no' see that he's a minister?"

"Hach," replied the other. "I dinna care. Scotland for ever!"

And then the cars suddenly awoke to a sense of duty, and passed upon their way.

The 79th were much hampered all the while

in their progress, by a tipsy French soldier, who insisted on shaking hands with me in the middle of the tune, and was extremely eager to exchange caps with me!

In fact it is the most difficult thing in the world to get your bagpipes tuned in France, the people are so urgent for "la musique de la guerre." In Rouen I tried to tune mine in my room. I endeavoured to do this quietly!—remembering a friend of mine at home, whose son is an invalid. In order to avoid disturbing him, when he practises his bagpipes, he plays them in his stocking feet! In two minutes, however, my room was filled with people, who put their ears to my drones, and poked the bag to see where the music came from. They are not good judges,—in fact, I do not think they know anything about it, for they seemed quite pleased with my piping.

The bagpipes were a wonderful medium of communication. For instance, I had been searching for one man, amongst many others, who had been missing for some weeks, and I had come to the conclusion that he either was not alive, or had been sent out of the country, or perhaps there was another alternative which I did not like to think of. I was suddenly sent some fifty miles further up the line, and was due to speak to the men the evening I arrived. "Bring your bagpipes," said the message. "There are some Scotsmen here." So, in the earlier part of the

evening I played the two or three tunes I know ; and then, later on, when the men had gathered, I had my service. At the close of the meeting a man stepped forward whom I had married four years ago in my Manse, and he told me of one or two others in whom I was interested. As I was leaving, two young lads came up and said that there was a large shed quite near, where there were some Scotsmen. Wouldn't I come down and play a tune to them? And I might have a chance of saying something to them. I said I was tired, and would come back the next evening. "But, sir," pleaded one of the boys, "you said to-night that 'now was the time!'" Caught thus on the hook of my own words I set off with them. It was a great dark shed, and there was no sign of anybody about, so I went right in, screwed up my pipes, and began. In a moment I was surrounded by men eight or nine deep, and, when I finished, there, at the end of my drones, was the very man I had been hunting for!

At another place, at the British Advanced Base, I had just finished speaking in a tent, when some officers came in and asked me to come across the railway lines, and speak to several hundred men who were living in horse-boxes. The officers' mess was in a horse-box ; and the humour of the soldiers had chalked on the side of it the sign,—"Hotel Cecil"! We went out to the lines, and I screwed up the

bagpipes. In two minutes the men were out and about me, and I was able to interest them.

I think Aldhelm of Malmesbury was a wise man, and was possessed of a real Home Mission secret, when he stood on the bridge with his harp, long ago, and gathered the people with his music ere he gripped them with his message. Who knows but piping parsons may find a place yet in the Home Mission Schemes of the Church!

A vast problem before us at one of the chief bases was the Labour shed. Here was housed a huge gathering of men from the riverside slums of everywhere, not, indeed, soldiers at all. They were a problem clothed in khaki. A service held there had features which were quite unique. A few would come in close to the speaker; but as you looked along the huge gloomy shed, dingy as a tunnel, you would see some washing, some shaving, some walking about slowly like discontented animals, in awful solitariness, while others, who had managed somehow to get drink, would be making themselves objectionable to their neighbours. They had nothing to sit down on except their mattresses, and it was a comfortless existence that was theirs. After a while detectives from Scotland Yard and elsewhere actually came over, with the result that a large batch was discovered, who were very badly "wanted" by their king and country at home.

On New Year's Eve I got about thirty Scotsmen to march down to this place in order

to give a Scotch concert to the Scotsmen there, having previously talked it over with a man of the Labour squad. When we arrived, however, this Scotsman was under arrest for manslaughter, and no arrangements had been made by him. Further, before we went, an officer said to me with a smile, "Take down an armed guard with you, for there's going to be murder there to-night. The Scotsmen have sworn to kill the English. They've been quarrelling for a long time." My fellow-countrymen, however, had managed to make themselves very drunk, beginning early, so that they might be the fitter, as they thought, for what was before them, with the result that most of them could not rise off their mattresses, where they lay helplessly gesticulating, screaming, and cursing.

It was a terrible experience,—a most unpleasant memory. Yet, after some of them had been cleared out in various ways, and the whole lot removed from that ghastly shed to clean and comfortable huts, the Y.M.C.A. built a recreation-room, where tea and coffee could be had, and where the men were treated like human creatures with a soul. A most notable change took place, and it became one of the most pleasant experiences to go amongst them, and to sit and talk with them. Our meetings there found more and more a ready response; and I am convinced that the way to uplift men is to get near them through humaneness of treatment, and at the same time

to arouse within them the belief that they have divine potentialities, though they are not using them at their highest value. The patience of Chaplain Naylor in his work in that place was an example of what is best in Home Mission enterprise. He was unwearying and resourceful at all times.

VII

THERE certainly never was, in the history of any empire, an army composed of such heterogeneous elements. So world-wide was the imperial appeal that every class responded with miraculous spontaneity. They have all settled down most wonderfully together.

It reminded one of the time of the South African war, when a Northern laird who commanded the local volunteers asked his corps if they were willing to serve the empire abroad in her need. He said:

"I do not wish you to think that you will suffer if you refuse, although I am your landlord and the employer of many of you. I will turn my back upon you, and count ten; and when I turn round once more I shall expect to see those who are willing to respond to the call of empire, a pace forward in advance of the others."

He turned round accordingly, but, when he turned again, the men still stood in an unbroken line.

"Men," he said, "I am ashamed of you! You are unworthy of the blood that's in you! Just to think that not one has stepped forward!"

But the old sergeant came out, and said, "Beg pardon, sir. We have all stepped forward!"

The condition of the army was not always free from objection; and there was once a great truth in the old dialogue in which one woman said to her neighbour:

"Is it no a terrible thing aboot Mrs Tamson's loon."

"What was that?" said the other. "I didna hear it."

"Oh, he's jined the sojers," replied the first speaker.

"Eh, my! Am I no vexed? His mither will be richt sair putten aboot. And this her washin' day too!"

That lamentation has not been heard for many a day now. The army is a clean service. The mothers are proud to see their sons ready in the day of need.

One came across members of every imaginable profession, engaged in every kind of duty—music-teachers, lecturers, lawyers, students, merchants, all sorts and conditions of men. It was somewhat striking to find in one place a detective, whose name, not so very long since, was widely known in connection with the arrest of a notorious murderer. He was serving as a sergeant at a veterinary camp, and was instrumental in discovering and thwarting a scheme of horse-lifting. It was proposed by the thieves that a haul of fifteen horses should be made one evening; but, as it was considered to be rather a big job, they proposed to take the stupid-looking

sergeant into their confidence and make him a partner of their gains. The proposal was made, and the simple-looking sergeant having agreed, succeeded in arresting a couple of very notable blackguards in khaki, who were much wanted in their native land!

Another type was a corporal who had broken down under the strain of Mons. He acted as an orderly in one of the camps, washing dishes, going messages, and cleaning up. He was a B.A. of an English university—his father was a K.C.—he was a member of a London Club, had a cottage in Italy, and a small yacht on the Mediterranean. He might have got himself discharged and sent home, but he preferred to do any job, however menial, that he might feel he had a share in the great task of keeping up the end of empire.

We had also organists, who could sit down at the creaky French piano, which was none the better of the rain that had dropped through upon it, and play selections from the Masters, or accompany anything you pleased, while more than one professional singer was able, in defiance of mud and damp, to sing to their fellows songs that made them dream of home.

One night, I remember, when the programme in the hut was hanging heavily in the wind, a mud-stained private got up on the platform, and with every sign of highest culture, recited *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, every line of which

was received with evident appreciation, and frequently with deep feeling, by the audience. At another camp one fellow stood up and gave a selection on a mouth organ, which would have brought down the house in any Music Hall.

In another place I had just finished my address when a man, who had very obviously been working in a stable, hurried in. Whenever he opened his mouth it was quite evident that he was an educated gentleman. I discovered that he was a landed proprietor, a magistrate of his native county, chairman of the County Council, and all that sort of thing. "I was too old," said he, "to be marching and fighting with the boys, but I know about horses, and I'm giving my knowledge in that direction, even in a humble way, to my country!"

Every one was possessed by the same desire, which was well expressed by a young soldier on a postcard I received not long since. In the corner of the card a Union Jack was printed, and the boy had written above it, "We must keep this flying!" It is to attain this end that so many of our very best are giving their lives to-day in France, Belgium, and Gallipoli.

The soldier is pathetically human. When you win his confidence he touches your heart very deeply.

I have said that the men were very faithful to the memories of home. I would find a sentry at

a shadow across memory with [illegible] to deep contemplation of the thought of those dear to him. After a long coat he would [illegible] his anxieties. "The wife's so gettin' my letters, though I'm gettin' hers. Would you write and tell her that you saw me and that I'm a right?" Then would come a somewhat forced [illegible] speedwell the poor wife getting into her head that Andrew had been sent to a hospital, and the number, at least would be called in demanding more assurance of the good man's perfect health ere the wife was satisfied!

There are countless little idylls of domestic love to be met with wherever the soldier unveils his heart. His hand will slip into his pocket, and out comes a picture postcard of "the missus," with another of the family, and then affection begins to tell stories of their excellence. One oldish man showed me in this way the picture postcard of his daughter. His heart shone out of his eyes as he looked upon her. She was evidently his ideal of goodness, and his impression was borne out by a well-worn letter of his neighbour's telling him what reason he had to be proud of his girl. "If you only had heard her singing the anthem in the chapel last Sunday! She is as good as she is pretty, and she always prays for her father's return." And then he told how it had been the desire of his wife and himself to buy a piano for the girl. And how he had seen instrument after instrument, but none had satisfied him; till at

length he found one that did. And he had it brought home, and set down opposite the door, so that when the girl came in from her work her eyes should fall upon it. And how when she saw it her eyes filled with tears, and she ran right over and kissed him. "And me pretending," said he, "as I laid down the papers, that I did not understand what it was all about!" And then we would both look away lest each other should see the tears upon our cheeks.

Another, a young man, with a portrait card of his little baby-girl, was wondering how she would be looking now, eight months bigger than when he left her. "She'll be speaking," said he. "Her mother wrote that she can say 'Dada' now!"

There were very many with the same thoughts, and the same deep love in their hearts; and one could not help wondering how many of them would ever see their little ones again.

If you have a camera, send out to any man you know of, at the Front, a snapshot of his dear ones. He will carry it close to his heart. You can send no kindlier gift.

The great uncertainty which dogged the men was frequently encountered in the ordinary camp life. It might be in the middle of a "Sing-song" or of a religious service—suddenly the door would open, the Sergeant-Major would call out, "Men of the Leicesters, or Camerons, or King's Rifles, fall in immediately, in full marching kit." They might have been laughing, or singing a happy

chorus, but they would rise, shake the laughter from their lips, give one look around, and with a nod or a wave of the hand, pass out into the night. The concert would go on ; but we knew that out there in the dark the camp was all astir with men getting ready for the march, and that soon the column would be on the move, their faces set towards the battle line.

Life was not a light thing, in the midst of experiences like that.

VIII

A FAVOURITE joke with fresh arrivals was for the men coming out of the trenches to call to these the favourite catch, "Are we down-hearted?" The new boys were always certain to shout the regulation "No!" And then the wet and mire-stained draggled older hands would chuckle, "Well, it won't be bloomin' long until you are!"

It was a strange experience, of course, for most, especially the Territorials, to be in those terrible trenches, with the guns rasping hell's horrible laughter of doom—boys that so recently were on the farm, or in the bank—men so lately merchants and clerks. Our own Edinburgh "Dandy Ninth" were at one time thirty-two days in the trenches, and then back again for eighteen. It shows that the old stuff is still amongst us, and that the children of our race have the strength to "stick it" till the finish.

It was easy to distinguish the new arrivals in the country, mainly by two things—their eagerness to speak French to everybody they met, and their apparently considering that it was the proper thing to chant, or whistle as they

marched, "It's a long way to Tipperary," long after that song had practically been forgotten by the military, having been sung stale. The first inclination was easily explained, for, of course, the new arrivals took for granted that every man they would see in France was bound to be a Frenchman. An instance of this occurred one evening when I was conducting a friend to a meeting place which was difficult of access. I had been at it only once before, and that by night in a motor car, so it was not easy to remember the way. Just when I became uncertain, I saw two men ahead, and going up to them asked in plainest English, "Is this the way to the *abattoir*?" To my astonishment I got for reply, "No comprong. We Onglays." "Why, bless my heart," said I, "so are we." And then, with laughter, we came to an understanding. The poor fellows had seen two figures bearing down upon them in the dark; and, being in France, they had come to the conclusion that these were Frenchmen, so they stirred up all the French they thought they had, as a protection against the deluge of an unknown vocabulary which they anticipated would be poured over them.

The boys were very earnest in their work. Worn by constant fighting, stricken by wounds, they kept before them always the one main object of their struggle. In the first determined effort of the Germans for the coast the strain was so

severe that some of our men were for the time bereft of reason, but the one thing that they babbled in their delirium was, "They must not get through to Calais!"

They gave you a kind greeting in passing, perhaps "Bon nuit!" or "Good night!" for they were very friendly, every one of them. The French and they "chummed up" very amusingly. At the corners of the roads leading up to the camps you would find, late at night, two or three of our men and a group of the others, very slightly elevated with a little French wine, trying to talk, and each believing he was doing very wonderfully in what was to each an entirely unknown tongue. Thus you heard, "We—bong — camerode!" "Yes — certainement — oui!" And then the heavy-toned Britisher would say, very deliberately, "Bong!" That represents the gist of quite a long conversation, and it shows how easily, with the aid of a little tonic, the soul of one man communicates to the other at least something that satisfies.

One was specially struck by the absence of grumbling among the soldiers. "Groucing" is usually considered to be a soldier's privilege. It really does not, however, mean actual discontent, but is just habit handed down from early times of military service, when there was very good cause for grumbling. One did not really hear complaints until one returned home! This was especially striking when one came

across the wounded, many of whom must have been suffering severely.

I have seen them with the mud of the trenches caked on them so thickly that their clothes had to be boiled before they could be cleaned. I have seen them with their feet swollen and black with the rot of their long vigil in the wet and mire. I have seen them with their woundings sore and deep. But I never heard a complaint.

In one hospital I came across a young man sitting on the edge of his bed, with his leg, which had been sorely shattered, in an antiseptic bath. On the shelf beside his bed I saw a kilt stowed away, and the yellow thread of the Gordon tartan gave me a clue to his corps. I said, "I am sorry to see you suffering so much." But he looked at me, and replied, perfectly calmly, "Hoots, it's just in the day's wark, ye ken. We're no' oot here for a picnic."

I was much impressed by his confidence in his cause, and his assurance in the issue of the conflict. I asked him what he thought of the enemy. "Ah, weel," he replied, "the warst o' it is that they're just as dour as we are. They're terrible stiff to steer! But we're gaun to shift them the middle o' next month." The taking of Hill 60 was the realization of his assertion.

"And do you think," I asked, "that we are going to win?"

He looked at me with wide-eyed astonishment,

and said, "Lod, sir, isna that what we're oot here for?"

The men were apt to take endurance as a matter of course. "You don't feel it so much when you're in the trenches," one said to me. "You see you are sort of screwed up to it!" A very apt and expressive phrase, expressive of the necessity for being in tune with the hellish diapason of awful war.

The Scotsman especially seems to have so many things to think of, and to remember as he lies there. In fact, I have never met a Scotsman yet who was not only ready but eager to discuss his minister, and his kirk, and the sermons he had heard, before anything else.

After the battle of Neuve Chapelle I was asked to go and see several of the wounded, very sorely stricken some of them. A Scotsman, whose regiment was one of those that were crumpled up in that grim battle, was in a bed near the door, and seemed to be in much pain. He was one of the thin-faced, high-boned type, with keen eyes, and a little sharp, dark moustache. When I entered he sat right up to welcome me, and though the signs of pain shot across his face he began—"Do ye ken oor minister at hame?" naming the reverend Doctor.

I replied that I did.

So he asked next—"Do you no' think he's gettin' terrible auld looking?"

I agreed, for politeness' sake; and he went on,

"I aye think it's yon Jewish Mission that's doing it!"

I quite admitted the possibility. And then he proceeded to give me samples of the splendid sermons he had heard from "the Doctor." In the next bed lay a Gordon Highlander, who felt it to be his duty to interject complimentary remarks about his own minister, quite evidently not believing that "the Doctor" could hold a candle to the reverend gentleman whose ministrations he himself recalled. And then, as the hospital orderly came round that moment to dress the other soldier's wound, I saw what the brave fellow was suffering all the while. A bullet had entered the calf of his leg, making an orifice about the size of a pencil. A few inches down it had emerged, forcing its way out till it left a gaping wound like a lily. It had struck something then, and been deflected from its course, entering the leg once more, and, having apparently hit the bone, emerged finally at the heel. It looked terribly sore—it gave one pain just to look at it. But what the poor man must have suffered, lying for hours where he fell until he was picked up, made one wonder how he endured it all. I could not help thinking that probably when he had sat up his first thought must have been, "Now, what will the minister think about this?" But he had no complaint; and he made no growl over his suffering. "We gi'ed them a heavy lick," he said. "We did oor

best!" And the thought afforded him great satisfaction.

The man who lay in the next bed had been wounded near the haunch—the bullet had traversed his body, come out at his left breast, hit something there, and, taking another pilgrimage, like a frightened thing seeking back the way it had come, narrowly missed his stomach, and finally had emerged about an inch below where it had entered first. When he had gathered himself together, after such a shock as his wound had given him, he had walked back two miles before he could be attended to!

The men were keen on the issues involved. Their regret over the loss of their officers was extremely poignant and touching. What they said is not to be repeated about other things in connection with the fight, but they were impressed above all with the result of our shrapnel fire, which had simply demoralized the Germans. "When we leapt into the trenches," said one of them, "they were kneeling wi' their backs to us, and their faces hid in their hands. We felt more inclined for fists than bayonets; but the dire and terrible work had to be accomplished." That was the dynamic moment which was missed, and which made all the difference between a successful military experiment, and a great historical victory.

The men would very proudly show the little slip of paper which they had among their valuables, and which had been given to them the

night before the battle. It was roughly printed, and ragged edged, but there was a touch of history in it. It said,

> "The attack which we are about to undertake is of the first importance to the allied cause. The army and the nation are watching the result, and Sir John French is confident that every individual in the Fourth Corps will do his duty and inflict a crushing defeat on the Germans' Seventh Corps which is opposed to us."

It was signed by General Rawlinson—a very different thing from the long speeches of attacking generals in days gone by, but quite in accordance with the terse matter-of-fact and business-like way in which this war is being carried on, taking for granted that the gift of courageous sacrifice has not gone out of fashion. Of course it seems little enough that we effected, at the cost of a great price in life and blood ; but its issue may be more far-reaching on the enemy's *moral* than we can gauge by the immediate material issue.

Even amongst some of the sorrows a quaint grotesquery sometimes crept. I remember one man who was very solemnly preserving as a souvenir of the war three of his toes in a bottle. He had come through the terrible experiences of the trenches, and a compound of affection and pride made him cling to his belongings, until he could get home again. Many a thrilling tale,

clinched by the gruesome proofs of his sufferings, would be told then!

I found another old soldier, in a tent, extremely anxious to get me to plead with a young fellow who was lying on the floor, in order that he might agree to have his toes cut off. "I lost mine," was his argument, "and it saves time and trouble darning your socks. You'll be sorry yet, when you see your big toe through a hole, that you didn't follow my advice!"

It means a good deal to a poor, forlorn fellow among strangers to see a face familiar in the old land. I remember a man, who came up after a service, and told me that he came from one of my former parishes. "When I saw you come in," he said, "I felt it was just like hame!"

In the work, one came across all kinds of people, and struck up every sort of acquaintance. I made an interesting friendship with a member of the Foreign Legion, of which one has so romantic ideas. They have a terrible time of it, and they are a remarkable gathering of the flotsam and jetsam of world-wide humanity, although in this war, many of our young Britishers who were in France enrolled under its standard. Wherever there is a difficult job to be done it is turned on to them to do it. They have a song of their own, which sufficiently reveals their appreciation of their own character. Its chorus is,

"Lock your doors! The Legion's passing by!"

He told me how, in the trenches, they had cultivated to perfection the gentle art of doing nothing. Someone at home had sent him out a New Testament, and he took to reading it, as he had not anything else to read; and for the first time he was perfectly amazed at the interesting story it contained! He had been a gentleman, born and educated, but he said, "I have lived a gay life; and when the war broke out there was nothing for it but to take my share of fighting. And the only opening for a man like me was the Legion."

I was much impressed one day to see a brigade of Algerians leaving for the Front. First came the pipers—a peculiar hand-pipe like the Scottish chanter. A wild desert-born strain breathed from it as they marched. Then the bugles and drums took it up, to be followed, after a few bars, by the Moorish pipe again. On they swung, heavy, swarthy, supple, fierce; and the last company had lilies stuck upon their fixed bayonets. They seemed supremely fit to make an impression of their own in any fight.

IX

SOMETIMES one met a man one knew, far from home, under odd circumstances. At a camp where I was speaking to a lot of Welshmen, a man came smiling up to me, and claimed acquaintance. When he told me who he was I at once saw that he had right to do so; but I said,

"Why are you in this regiment, and you an Edinburgh man?"

"Oh," said he, "I wanted to see you, and I borrowed a Welshman's cap, as this camp is out of bounds from mine."

"But," I suggested, "won't you get into a scrape getting back to your own camp?"

"No fear!" he replied. "I ken fine where I hid my ain bonnet."

He came across to other two meetings, hiding his Royal Scots glengarry under a tree, and marching boldly into the forbidden camp with another man's cap!

One has to be out there to realize fully the terribleness of war, and of this war in particular. When we saw the men whose nerves had been shattered in the awful retreat at Mons, we began to understand what that meant. One strong man

I knew who was such a nervous wreck that he could not face the thought of sleeping in the dark alone in a tent ; and another, sometimes, when he woke up out of sleep and remembered what he had seen and come through, could not help weeping in the night for the fellows he had known, and whom he would never see again ! When we at home thought that our brave fellows were holding their own on the way from Mons, we had no conception how often the fate of our first Expeditionary Army had hung on the most slender thread. Our men could not understand for a long while what the retirement meant. They thought they were leading the Germans into a trap. One man in a single sentence gave a most vivid picture of what it meant. He said, "We would have the kettle on the fire—suddenly we'd have to tip it up, and away for all we were worth !"

We thought of an orderly retirement all the way ; but one said to me, "We were sometimes running for our lives. They were after us continually, pressing at our heels in motor cars."

One well-known regiment got into a wood and were cut off. Seventy-five men reached the camp, all that were left of them, having fought their way through the enemy's lines until they had at last, for dear life's sake, to fling away their whole equipment and run. Reinforced and made up again and again, the rags of that corps had at last just to be scattered among others.

And yet the marvel was that, when the time came, the brave remnant of that army, when it turned round and got at the Germans, made as brave and impetuous an advance as though they never had tasted the bitter depression of retreat!

I met several Scotsmen in Rouen who were glad to see a fellow-countrymen. There is a freemasonry of the hills and lochs that becomes a living thing in a far country. One of these men said of Mons, "I was proud of our own folk, when I saw the Argyll and Sutherlands, fighting every inch of their road, open their ranks and receive the others who were retiring, in accordance with orders. And when we came to ——, the officer, stained with blood, and his men all torn and bleeding, were still in fighting trim, and ready for anything." The same might be said of every regiment in that retreat.

Everywhere in France there was a sentry of some kind, sometimes in uniform, and sometimes just in ordinary clothes. They did not look very formidable, but their bayonet was an ugly, long, thin bodkin of a weapon, disgustingly easy for thrusting in between one's ribs. They seemed terrible enough, however, in the dark. One night I was motoring with a friend, seeing some ladies home. It was a long steep street; and half-way up there was a barrier—a cart laid half across the road, with a lantern hung on the shafts. A sentry challenged us, and we had to stop. He poked his head in under the canopy of the car,

and spoke very sharply to us, enquiring if we had our military passes, which we had not with us. He was a little skinny man, but I must say he looked fierce enough then, and his bayonet seemed yards long, and most blood-thirsty! He let us go on, but again stopped us on our return; and this time, around the corner was another dark figure with his fixed bayonet ready to settle any dubiety in his own way. One just shudders to think what it might mean if any of these fellows were to lose his head, and poke you up with cold steel before he got started to his catechism!

Of course, even the most solemn side had sometimes a touch of the ridiculous jostling up against it. For example, one day I was just sitting down to food when a man came with a Ford motor waggon and said, "Come along at once. There are twelve hundred Leicestershire men just off the transport, and they are away for the Front in half an hour. They wish a service. Come and speak to them, for I can't!"

So I got inside the Ford waggon, which was a miniature prison van, in fact we regularly called it "Black Maria," the door was bolted on me, and away we went full-speed for the docks. A bumpy ride it was! We were stopped by the French sentry, who asked what was in the van. On being assured that there was nothing in it he allowed us to pass. But I could not help wondering what he might have done if he had opened the door and found me curled up inside!

I almost felt his long, thin bayonet in my back, when I considered that he would most probably first of all conclude that I was a German spy, and then make enquiries afterwards.

A change took place later on in the kind of sentry, a lot of oddments having been brought in, evidently from the most remote provinces. To meet them in the evening lifted you away to something like the Pyrenees, for I never in my life saw a set of men so like bandits and brigands.

Those Leicesters were a fine set of men stalwart and clean-eyed. They were, of course, busy at their correspondence. I went to the commanding officer and asked him how long he was giving his men.

"Half an hour," he replied. "But if it's about a service you ask, don't hurry."

It was a very moving and solemn experience. The men seemed impressed by the sense of what was awaiting them, and by their distance from home; and at the close of the service they begged for Testaments to be given to them. I was just distributing these as fast as I could when a dear, delightful old gentleman whom I knew, came forward.

"Is there no literature," he asked, "that I could hand out to the men?"

So I sent him to our orderlies to get what he required; and I saw him several times handing about huge arm-loads of a little pamphlet which

he advised the men to read carefully and to treasure for the good that was in them. The men put them in their pockets beside the Testaments, and it was not until next day that we discovered that the pamphlets were advertisements for Horlick's Malted Milk, which had been given him by mistake!

Another time he came across a young soldier from Enfield, and, just out of kindliness, to make conversation, he asked about the weapons and munitions of war which were being manufactured there. Two days afterwards a military detective was on the track of "an elderly gentleman, somewhat like a German professor, who seemed to be a very eager spy!"

That there was, of course, great necessity for special care in this respect was very clear. I heard of communications being carried on between continental agents and spies in our home country through letters which were actually posted in English villages though written in Germany or France. At Boulogne when I was waiting beside an English gentleman at the railway ticket-box, a little, shabby man came up to him, and said, "Sir, will you kindly post this letter for me in England?"

"Certainly not," said the gentleman; and then turning to me, he said, "How do I know he isn't a spy?"

And he well might have been. It would have been interesting to be at the censoring of that

letter; though of course it might be perfectly innocent—only one learns to be careful.

We could not help being impressed by the soldierliness and high-toned manliness of the Territorials. It was very remarkable to hear from men who had shared the fighting with them how bravely and fearlessly they had gone into the fray. A Black Watch sergeant said to me that he had often wondered to see how fellows, who, he was certain, had never put up their hands or blackened anybody's eyes in their lives, went in like seasoned veterans, and faced the risks of life and death in this momentous struggle.

We often compared the Territorials and the Regulars. One thing the war has done in this respect. It has put a stop to people speaking of certain corps as "only Territorials." The Territorials struck one as being the very finest specimens of British flesh and blood that one could desire to see—splendidly built men, calm and keen. Where they differed came out thus. You would meet an old Regular in crumpled khaki, and you would say to him, in sport,

"How is it you have not been shot?"

"Ah, sir," he would reply, with a twinkle, "I'm too old a soldier for that."

Long and steady training had taught him how to take effective cover, while at the same time it had hardened him so that he could snuggle up in the mud and fall asleep anywhere; and his forty

winks were as refreshing to him as a good night's sleep to a young lad who had only had a few months' stiffening. The Territorial on the other hand is filled with the romantic enthusiasm of soldiering. He is perhaps apt to think that it is not noble to hide, or to crawl into a hole. And he sometimes forgets how conspicuous a man can be against a sky-line, and that, while a bush or a twig will hide him, it cannot stop a bullet. Even the Germans speak of his habit of standing up to light a cigarette, or walking when he should be crawling, into his trench, or out of it. Nevertheless, he is as brave as the best; and he is possessed by the love of country and devotion to the cause.

X

THERE never was so great an opportunity for a spiritual upraising as that which is offered by this war. The men are pressed on either side with the vast issues of life and death and eternal things. They are hungry for the bread of life. It is true that the cynic may say "Is it not a case of superstition—or something like fear—a sop to Cerberus—a case of 'When the devil was sick the devil a monk would be'?" I do not think so. Nay, more—I do not for a moment believe that it is so. These men have passed through a really great awakening.

Some time since in our country a rich man hung out upon his castle a flag consisting of the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes sewn together. Somebody said to him, "That flag will never fly. It is far too heavy." But he replied, "Wait until the breeze blows from the mountains and through the glens, and you will see it float out in beauty from the staff on which it hangs so heavily now." What we require to-day is to sew the flag of the cross of sacrifice on to the Union Jack. The breeze that will uplift it before the nations is blowing in storm-

gusts now through Europe ; and, if we are faithful, it will become a banner of veritable victory.

It was fine to come across the point of view of some of the men in the matter of religion. One old fellow recounted to me how he had "settled the hash" of a man who was sneering at the Christian faith. "And mind you," he said, "he had been brought up in a Christian home, and had seen everything that was good in Christian influences. I was trying to get a hold of some young fellows when he came in, and cut athwart the talk with laughter and mockery. And I said to him, 'Jim, what would happen to a man who swore to defend the colours of the king, and then, when others were fighting, went over to the enemy? He'd be shot, wouldn't he? You know very well what you're doin'. And yet you think Christ has no claim on you, when you play the traitor to His flag.' He went white, I tell you. Yon's him over yonder. Go and speak to him." I went, and I found, after a little talk, that it was as I had heard, and that undoubtedly the young fellow had been the better of the shake he had received, for his soul had evidently oscillated into equilibrium again.

Things that are worlds apart come strangely together in a time like this. For example, in Havre, in the cemetery, there is a grave marked by a simple symbol of memorial love, which more than anything shews how a great and deep experience like this crisis binds together remote

discordant elements. It marks the resting-place of a North African Moslem, and tender hands that laid him to sleep there placed over his dust the cross, emblem of the faith of those for whom he fell, and on the cross they engraved the crescent and the star, the emblem of his own faith which had upheld him in his sacrifice! I wonder if there is another memento like that anywhere else in the world!

We always thought of the brave womanhood at home, of the sufferings of love that had said good-bye for ever—of the little babes that were being born who would never see their fathers' faces.

If once you heard those marching feet, if once you saw the suffering borne without complaint, the agony mastered by manhood—if once you heard in our huts *The Lord's my Shepherd*, or *Lead Kindly Light*, sung by those who might never sing them again—if once you saw those men bowed down in prayer for you and those they loved at home, and heard the "Amen" wrung out of earnest hearts, you would wonder what you have done that these should die for you; and you would understand as in the flash of a new and fresh revelation the secret of the spell of sacrifice, and the meaning of the wounds of Christ, in a way beyond the power of human word's expression.

This war has a real touch of the hand of God in it. God is smiting the drowsy luxurious world upon its side, stirring it out of ease and

selfishness to recognition of duty and right. He is asking a great price from us as the cost of our awakening—sacrifice of life, sacrifice of money, the loss of many dear to us. It has cost us much already, but it will cost us more. And if the country does not wake to the necessity this great campaign will cost us everything. It has taken us all our time to hold the enemy where they are. Think what it will cost us to drive them out of France, to drive them out of Belgium, to humble them in their own country until they learn in a stern and real humiliation the secret of the true greatness of a nation. It is sad to say good-bye, but, considering the issues that are involved, I say to those who have lost their loved and dear, "Clothe yourselves in a proud thankfulness rather than sorrow, ye fathers and mothers, for the brave boys that ye begot and bore, who wore their wounds like roses as they went home to God. Be proud that your flesh and blood were not degenerate in the day of sacrifice for others."

I recently, in this respect, got a new motto for my life. A young Canadian who was a student of Edinburgh University, had gone over to help among the troops, and I got to know him intimately. He grew into my heart. And I was expecting to see him shortly after my own return home. But a friend came to my house, and I asked, "How did you leave Hubert Allan? Is he well?" But he answered quietly, "He

is dead. He is to be buried to-day!" Dead! I could not believe it. I recalled how happy he was in his labour in the camp above Dieppe—how kind he was, how faithful, earnest, and true. So I wrote his father away in Canada; and he replied, "I am not so sorry, for he gave his best for the land he loved and the liberty dear to the world. And yet I cannot help feeling sorry for the thousands who to-day are mourning for their dear ones also, who have died FOR THE THINGS THAT MATTER." That is the great key-note of the struggle whose call has summoned so many of the Empire's best and bravest to the supreme sacrifice. And it should give a nobler marching music to our world hereafter.

I could not help sometimes remembering the Swiss patriot who, with his band of peasants, armed with clubs, one day came up against a host of steel-clad Austrians, with their long and terrible spears. He could find no way of penetrating their phalanx, and hope was dying in their hearts, and liberty with it. But he turned round to his peasants and said, "Wait, I will make way for liberty," and stretching out his arms, as Christ stretched out His arms upon the Cross, he clutched in one sweep all the spears he could gather, and thrust them into his body, as he leaned down to the earth, weighing them down as he fell. And as he stumbled unto death he shouted, "Make way for liberty." Through the door his body made the peasants

leaped to victory or death. That is what our boys are doing out yonder. In the splendour of their sacrifice for us we learn more and more the wonder and the sacrifice of Christ Himself for you and me.

Only the other day in a recruiting office a young man came in while I was there, offering himself for the army, and for the Cameron Highlanders in particular. He gave his reasons, and they were worthy of note—first, that the Camerons had suffered so much, and second, that the country needed the service of every man she could get. I was glad of the opportunity of shaking hands with a true patriot!

At home the people have taken a very long time to understand what this war means to the men who are out. Of the first set of some famous regiments which went to the Front at the beginning only a meagre handful are left; the rest are in their graves or in German prisons. Even now, when we at home think from the newspaper reports that there is nothing doing, death takes its daily toll of about two hundred. If we had sufficient munitions of war, that deadly fire of the enemy, for which we have to pay such a price, would be efficiently kept down, and valuable lives be saved. It is to our shame that so many of our men are still without weapons. Every other thought except providing the fighting line with what is required should be put aside, out of the minds of our people.

When I landed back from France, I motored from Southampton to London ; and for most of the way I was rendered absolutely despondent, so much seemed to be only beginning. In one village I saw a corps of men assembling. They were like a regiment in Comic Opera. I had no conception that anywhere outside of a museum such uniforms could have still been found to-day. Some men were in old militia jackets, some with tartan trousers, some with blue trousers, all kinds of motley. They looked as if Napoleon had landed, and as if old boxes had been hauled out from beneath their grandmothers' beds, and they had draped themselves in every kind of oddments. And I thought if this is all that is left in our country, what is to happen ! But near Aldershot we swung into a village where long lines of khaki-clad men in full equipment were resting. Just as we passed, the bugle sounded, they sprang to their feet ; and we motored along about three and a half miles of splendid fellows, as good as any I had seen abroad—a whole brigade, with pontoons and guns, and about the best bugle band I ever heard in my life, playing *Marching through Georgia,* and *The Old Folks at Home.* They were hardy, with every sign of training, ready at any moment for the Front. And the others we had seen would of course soon be as fit.

At another place I stopped for some hours ; and, just to gather what the feeling of the country

was, I moved from shop to shop, buying little trifles in order that I might be able to listen. One man was talking over the counter to a customer, and laying down the law very largely.

"Wait till we get through the Dardanelles!" he was saying. "Wait till we get up on their flank! Wait till we get over the Rhine! We don't need to worry—time is on our side."

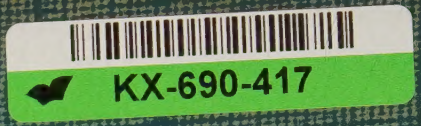
And I could not help thinking of the brave fellows I had seen—the men whom I had spoken to, and moved amongst, and looked in their faces, and seen the light that was there, lying now, so many of them, in the long graves of the battlefields where they had died for us. I could not help thinking of the blanks in the line of the brave, while so many at home were talking stark, selfish nonsense about time being on our side, and no need for worry being ours. I tell you while we have any of our men unequipped, while we have masses of men untrained, while we have thousands whom the necessity of our empire has never stirred with the slightest twinge of duty and of sacrifice, there is nothing on our side except continual risk of failure and defeat. Every slacker should be looked upon as an enemy. As one woman said, "I am glad I'm not the mother of any of them!" The country should think of nothing else but how to feed the battle line with reinforcements, and keep in good heart the men in the weary trenches—the men who have stood waist-deep in water till their feet

have rotted, who have lain in mud till they have contracted diseases that will never leave them, who have lost life and limb in sea and land that our slackers might not lose their breakfast, and that they might sleep at ease.

If I had a thousand tongues their messages would move up and down throughout the whole land, telling our people to awake, telling them that it will take the weight of every man we have, the power of every sacrifice we can make, and more precious blood than we like to think of ere this vastly momentous issue, entailing the liberty and right of the soul of the world, be brought to victory for our arms. The most relentless power that ever wrote upon its banner that "Might is Right," and that wrong is not wrong if only it can prevail, will need all the force of the manhood of Europe in the field against it, ere it be thrust back to the hell from which it sprung.

Remember, no matter what sacrifice this may entail upon us all, the men are worthy of it, true to the best traditions of the manhood of our past, and building up a new tradition of finest courage and spiritual strength.

God bless them, and make us worthy of them, and of their blood-stained passion for our sakes!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